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THE

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THE MISSION WORK OF RAGGED SCHOOLS.

During the past month four important Conferences of the workers in the London Ragged Schools were held. The subject considered bore so much on the future of Ragged Schools, that we think it advisable to devote this and the next number to a record of these Conferences.

We need not intimate that the primary object of the founders of Ragged Schools is still the great aim of their conductors. Thus, by Sunday Schools, Children's Services, Senior Bible Classes, Scholars' Prayer Meetings, and Ragged Churches, they endeavour to bring old and young under subjection to Christ. It was with a view to strengthen and still further develop our evangelistic agencies, that the Committee of the Ragged School Union unanimously resolved to invite their fellow-labourers to a Conference on "Mission Work in Ragged Schools, and how to promote it."

As nearly 3,000 persons are engaged in this great mission work in London, it was impracticable to gather them at one meeting, especially if the subject selected for consideration were to be fully discussed. Hence they were invited to attend that division in which their school is planted, and the meetings were largely attended by the most active of our fellow-labourers.

At each divisional meeting papers were either read, or the subject for consideration was introduced by two members of the Committee of the Central Society. As these papers were not intended to exhaust the subject, but were rather regarded as suggestive, many of the leading workers in Ragged Schools took part in the free discussion which was invited. The report will show that many valuable suggestions were offered, especially as regards the extension of Sunday School work, and for utilising schoolrooms on week-nights for mission work among juveniles.

From the earnest spirit evinced by the various speakers we cannot doubt that, as a result of these Conferences, our mission work among the young will be strengthened, and that many more agencies will be employed with a view to win youth for Jesus.

PROCEEDINGS AT THE CONFERENCES ON "MISSION WORK IN RAGGED SCHOOLS, AND HOW TO IMPROVE IT."

THE first Conference on the above subject was held at Albert Street Refuge, Spitalfields, on March 4th. Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS presided.

Mr. GENT stated that some time ago it was thought advisable that an aggregate meeting of Ragged School workers should be called for the purpose of holding a conference. Upon further consideration, however, the general opinion was that the best plan would be to call a conference in each district of the metropolis. They had accordingly made arrangements for such conferences, of which this was the first. The Committee were extremely desirous that the friends should express themselves freely on the question put before them, "The Mission Work in Ragged Schools, and how to promote it." The religious work was the great centre of their movement, and the question they would like the friends to speak upon would be the best means of promoting it.

The CHAIRMAN then read the following paper on—

MISSION WORK IN RAGGED SCHOOLS.

In one of the early papers explanatory of their proceedings and published by the Committee of the Ragged School Union, it was pointed out that the Ragged School movement was essentially a religious movement, and that its originating and sustaining elements sprang from a high-toned principle and a living faith. The cold scepticism of public opinion in those early days could scarcely understand why men and women—many of whom were heavily weighted by their own cares and anxieties—should care about the neglected and unsavoury juvenile population in the purlieus of our great city. Such neighbourhoods were seldom visited by any but the ministers of justice, and whilst missionaries—to their honour be it said—crossed the trackless ocean and unfurled the banner of the cross in heathen lands, myriads in our own immediate neighbourhoods were left to perish untaught and uncared for. They are described by the *Times* as "fester heaps of moral rottenness—a lawless, faithless, and Godless population, to be feared, but still more to be pitied." After long years of neglect, Christian philanthropy was at length happily directed to their emancipation, and individuals possessing the spirit of their Divine Master, regardless of danger and disease, penetrated their haunts of vice, and found that even amongst the most depraved of our fellow-creatures there were those who were accessible to human sympathies.

It was not only to alleviate their sad condition and to fit them for the duties of this life, but especially to prepare them for the life to come, that so many of the pioneers of this movement, with unflagging zeal and earnest prayer to the God of all grace, commenced their crusade. Uncheered by the sympathies of their fellows, they pursued their benevolent but voluntary calling, and through good report and through evil report they persistently persevered, instructing the ignorant,

raising the fallen, and remembering the forgotten. We were thought by many to be well-meaning but mischievous enthusiasts, entirely mistaken in our self-imposed vocation, and for our humane and Christian endeavours to raise the very lowest and most degraded we were not unfrequently visited with the most wholesale condemnation.

Remembering, as we do, the overcrowded, foul, and filthy dens in which large masses of the population herded together, the unblushing brutality of their daily lives, the ignorance of both old and young fostered by long years of neglect, can it excite wonder that such a population should be termed "dangerous?" But it was to such that Christian philanthropy and love wended their way, and often amidst scenes of opposition and violence proclaimed the glad tidings of a Saviour's love. Nor was this all—the hungry were fed, the naked clothed, the ignorant instructed, and to the poor, literally, was the gospel preached. Various useful and benevolent enterprises were also called into being for their benefit and succour. Refuges for the homeless, and Schools of Industry, Penny Banks, and Mothers' Meetings, Clothing and other Clubs, all contributed to relieve want and to prepare for honourable and profitable employment—such was our early mission. Multitudes of boys, who, under the fostering care of pious, painstaking, and devoted teachers, had striven to obtain good characters, were further benefited by the establishment of the Shoeblack Brigade, which worthy offspring of our system provided employment for the unemployed, and has produced in the earnings of the lads in twenty-two years (apart from its other advantages) no less a sum than £122,000 sterling.

Nor is this all: many who were scholars in our schools are now excellent and praiseworthy teachers, while some have been installed into the honourable positions of secretaries and superintendents of our schools, proving the reality of the truth, "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Truly and emphatically, "the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

But there is one danger to which reference should be made, and the which to a large extent has brought about these conferences. It is well known that in many of the schools, especially in many of the smaller but still most useful schools, the paid teachers were not always selected for their high intellectual or educational attainments, but rather for their fervent piety and zeal, together with a general aptitude for promoting the social and religious welfare of the children, for whom and their parents great sacrifices are often made by this patriotic and most useful body of labourers.

It is true that many of the schools in which they so perseveringly labour do not meet the requirements of modern legislation; in other words, according to educational and recently promulgated standards, they are neither efficient in buildings nor instruction. It is with regret, therefore, we learn that in some cases notice has already been served upon the managers that unless made efficient in conformity with the regulations of the London School Board the children in attend-

ance at such schools will be deemed as non-attending, and consequently liable to the penalties prescribed by the Elementary Education Act of 1870. The question therefore is, Shall these schools be closed? Shall they any longer exert a beneficial influence upon the wretched neighbourhoods in which they are placed? Shall the services of the large number of voluntary teachers associated with them be surrendered?—those services which in the past have been so useful, which have shed light into many a dark home, and given joy and gladness to many a heavy aching heart. Shall these useful and honourable services be discontinued, and our mission to the poor be a thing merely of the past? The loss of such services in our densely populated neighbourhoods would be a calamity indeed, and altogether unworthy of men and women calling themselves Christian. Great and good service may still be rendered—nay, must be rendered to the cause of truth by a renewed consecration to the service of Almighty God, and redoubled efforts must be put forth for the benefit of both old and young in the various neighbourhoods with which we are identified.

May I remind you still further that Ragged School work is synonymous with mission work, and that its aims and tendencies are to reclaim, to elevate, and ennoble the most degraded, the most abject and depraved? It harmonises with and is founded upon the teaching of the New Testament. We wait not to ask who is our neighbour, it is our duty as well as our privilege to offer a helping hand to such as need it, and whatever else may be doomed, we at least will not imperil the work which by God's mercy we have helped to build, nor will we forego the honour and the luxury of doing that good to others which we, in like circumstances, would have them do to us. Failure has never been one of the characteristics of the Ragged School teacher; on the contrary, our efforts to advance the social, moral, and spiritual well-being of the neglected masses of the population have never failed, and never can fail. Imperfection may now and again have marred our work and prevented for a time the good which we had hoped to accomplish, but we do not fail to remember that all human systems are necessarily imperfect. Looking back, however, upon the last thirty years of the existence of Ragged Schools, we are bold to say that no system has accomplished so much, and that at so small a cost, for the permanent benefit of the class for whom these schools were established.

I have merely touched upon the broad principle of mission work in connection with our schools, and leave to those who follow me the duty of working out its general applicability. This will doubtless vary in different localities; what is suitable for one may not be suitable for another. Nevertheless, there are certain objects which merit our warmest attention. Evangelical gospel teaching in our various Ragged Sunday Schools is of paramount importance, and is the foundation upon which every other benevolent effort should be based. Others will suggest the best means by which our work may be made more useful and attractive. In the meanwhile let us not be weary in well-doing, knowing that in due time we

shall reap if we faint not; and, in the words of the late excellent Dr. Guthrie, in his third and last plea, I conclude my observations: Ragged Schools were an experiment—they are a success, a glorious success; may they never cease to flourish.

Mr. J. H. LLOYD then read a paper on—

SUNDAY EVENING MISSION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN.

It is necessary, in laying a few remarks before this meeting to-night for discussion, to allude briefly to the change that has come over us by the passing of the Elementary Education Act of 1870, because I think the operation of that Act will give the work of the Ragged School Union a distinctness of purpose in direct mission work, which hitherto, although far from overlooked, has been but a part of its object, and that this is the proper time to review our work, and if it is to last, to shape its future in accordance with the needs and progress of the times.

In the twelve months ending with September, 1872, 147,000 persons were committed to prison in this country, exclusive of debtors, &c. Of this number 31 per cent. could neither read nor write at all; 61 per cent. so imperfectly that they may be really considered uneducated; 4½ per cent. read and write well; ½ per cent. only had had a superior education. What more convincing proof could be given of the intimate connection between ignorance and crime? Nor, indeed, could any stronger argument be adduced for the necessity of a really national compulsory system of education, by which the lowest class—*i.e.*, the great feeder of crime—may be brought under the restraining influence of discipline and instruction; for education must tend to lessen crime by quickening and developing the moral sense, and thus preparing the mind for those religious influences which induce men to avoid crime from a sense of the hatefulness of the sin it involves. In other words, *education must be the forerunner of religion.* It can hardly be said to have been so yet in England, when 95 per cent. of the criminal classes—and this is but typical of much larger numbers—are sunk in such ignorance. And may not this one fact partly account for the awful apathy of the lower classes in religious matters?—and if so will not national education now begin to clear the way? The State is at length doing *its* duty, and the Christian Church must also awake to *its* privileges and responsibilities.

The question affecting *us* is—how can *we* adapt our work to the new state of things, and promote mission work? By which, I take it, we mean—how can we best illustrate and enforce the evangelical teaching of our Lord, as set forth in the Scriptures, and so bring home religious truths to the hearts and consciences of the children as to affect their future lives?

Now, Ragged Schools have, among other happy results, been one of the principal means of showing the necessity for extended and compulsory education, and, in fact (with the labours of our noble president), have done more to give an impetus to this end than any other means; but having done this, they will of necessity, as far as their day-school work is concerned, have in due time to stand on one side, whilst the stronger power they have helped to evoke gradually occupies the

ground—for that work was only taken when utterly neglected by all, and we ought to rejoice to know, that as far as that portion of it is concerned, it will be done in a manner with which we never could hope to compete. Why, unlimited cash and compulsion have been but romantic dreams in Ragged School work! and yet these are the two great points the national system has secured. I think we should thank God and take courage in seeing a great work being accomplished, of which we were the acknowledged pioneers, and fall back on our clearly defined path in supplementing the State action in that which of necessity must always, to a Christian man, be its one great want, viz.: the spirit of religion in the teaching of its schools.

Thousands will soon be inside schools who have hitherto been but outsiders, and will gradually be made amenable to law and discipline. Following this, minds, hitherto shrouded in ignorance, will begin to receive rays of light, and will be the better prepared for the reception of seeds of religious truth, which finds a most uncongenial, if not fatally cold soil in ignorant indifference. Mark how the ignorant stand aloof from our places of public worship: how can the darkness comprehend the light? Who, I ask, are the supporters of the great religious and benevolent societies of England, but precisely that class whose minds have been prepared by education for the intelligent reception of gospel truth?

But where are the teeming thousands who have passed through our National and British Schools?—schools, mark, where religion is professedly taught. Why, as far as my observation extends, in London not five per cent. attend the public worship of the sanctuary.

May this not teach us we have been relying too much on the schoolmaster? Has not the church been leaving to him its own special work, imagining he has been doing it, which results seem to deny. The new system has at least this merit—it cannot teach religion, and does not pretend to. Here is the sharp decisive line. We now know what we did not before—exactly where we are, and for the moment feel the difficulty greatly. We know what *we do want*, it is home influence of the right kind; that is what is wanted to supplement the teaching of the State School. The heart as well as the intellect to be cultivated; and this influence, in the class with which we have to deal, is most signally absent. How can we, then, as followers of the Saviour, having the deepest and most profound interest in our poor neighbours—how can we counteract the constant and habitual evil example of the home? To deal with the children we must "get at them," and for the class we want to approach, and by the means we have to approach them (for the teachers must be considered as well as the taught) there seems to be one day supremely suitable, for it is on the Sabbath alone the children are "get-at-able" at such hours, and in such numbers, as to make our work most appreciable, and on the Sabbath alone can the great mass of our teachers *command* their leisure. Although very much may be said of the importance of morning and afternoon Sunday Schools for younger children, we all know that from a variety of causes, on Sunday even-

ings the elder boys and girls present themselves in far greater numbers than on other parts of the day.

The average attendance at the Sunday Schools in connection with the Ragged School Union is:—Morning, 60; afternoon, 110; evening, 170. And taking six of the larger Sunday Schools of the East of London, the proportion is much greater:—Average attendance at Colchester Street, Chicksand Street, Bluegate Fields, Hope Place, Carr Street, and Nichol Street:—Morning, 88; afternoon, 250; evening, 400. Thus, these six schools alone have an aggregate average attendance of 2,400 children on Sunday evening.

I would venture to state that, given a suitable room, in almost any neighbourhood, for a Children's Service on Sunday evening, *it will be filled*—even the most unattractive and dirty rooms fill—and that sometimes to overflowing. Could not the Ragged School Union, by concerted action with Christian friends in every district in London, be the means of opening more good, large, well-ventilated, cheerful rooms—well lit, and with bright fires? and is it too much to say we could by these means gather the greater proportion of the children of London, at all events for the six winter months, and this *for the distinct and recognised purpose of giving religious instruction?* What an encouragement this should be to us—the children waiting to come in, and who can be gathered in *almost any numbers*. Surely Christian liberality should find the place, and Christian ingenuity the means to instruct and interest them, until by the blessing of God the seeds of truth are sown in their young hearts.

It has been a matter of speculation with me how it is, that during the Saviour's public teaching, we have no record of any special words addressed to the crowds of lads who must have followed him, for boy nature is the same the wide world over, then as now, busy, active, restless, curious, sure to be attracted by any novelty; and the journeyings and miracles of the Prophet of Nazareth must have had wonderful attraction for them. May we not trace something of his teaching of this class in the constant use of parables—picture-talking—a style so impressive to young minds? and do we not lose great effect over the young by not accepting the lesson, not picture-talking, but the freer use of illustrative teaching—*i.e.*, the use of good pictures in teaching? There are some few teachers whose gifts and earnestness are so great that they can do without this aid; but I take it, that to the vast majority present a tolerably vivid picture of the subject lesson would be a wonderful assistance, and the excellent diagrams of the Working Men's Educational Union in part supply this deficiency.

Why should not our Union provide a sufficient number of sets to allow a free circulation of them amongst the schools, not for lectures, but for Sabbath Evening Services. This would be a great boon, as attention would be arrested—for it is far easier to interest and instruct children through the eye than the ear—and by this means both senses would be appealed to. There are already fourteen sets of directly religious subjects published, numbering 180 diagrams, and some 326 more on kindred subjects, such as "Missionary Illustrations," "Ancient Egypt," "Catacombs of

Rome," &c., and if others were wanted, the demand would soon create a further supply. In addition to pictures as likely to be useful to Sunday Evening Services, I would draw the attention of the teachers to two excellent volumes, prepared by Mr. Gray, of Halifax, entitled, "The Class and the Desk," containing a long series of skeleton lessons in Old and New Testament subjects. If these are too advanced for our juvenile audience, there would be little difficulty in getting simpler ones prepared on the same model. Let the Union know *your practical difficulties*—they will always receive the most careful consideration. Don't use 1, Exeter Hall, as a "Union Bank" only, but let it be headquarters for practical as well as pecuniary assistance.

Hymns in large type (published by the Sunday School Union at 3d. a copy), for collective singing, are far preferable to small books in the hands of children, and by leading from the sheet the singing can be more easily controlled. Mr. Proudman's able course of lessons, delivered under the auspices of the Union, will, I hope, be very useful in aiding the teachers to conduct a higher worship, and some few of our schools already are meeting weekly for a Service of Song—I would rather call it "a Service of Praise"—and such meetings should always be accompanied by a short practical religious address, or its great aim will soon be lost sight of by the children. But music in any reverent form, and especially vocal music, should be used largely as one of the best means of interesting, and by the association of words, instructing young minds.

If a sufficient number of teachers can be obtained to break the evening school up into classes of about a dozen each for say forty-five minutes, to be followed by a stirring, earnest address, occupying twenty minutes more, it is preferable, as it secures personal contact, variety, and change; but if really a sufficient number to do the work *effectually cannot* be secured, it is better to confine the operation of the school to the collective service only, the one or two teachers taking the lessons with suitable singing between, as there is really no more difficulty for a man qualified for his work interesting 200 boys than 20.

But I would lay the most emphatic earnestness on the importance of *systematic* teaching—that the scope of the whole session's teaching should have a *definite end in view*—that each series of lessons should, in this respect, be complete in themselves. Remember how many may never hear the Word of God again, and how reiteration is necessary, that the Word be not choked or rooted up by its uncongenial surroundings. Should the class system be adopted, the lesson should be preparatory to the address; for instance:—"The slaying of the firstborn and the institution of the Passover." Why, how wonderfully the desk would enforce the teaching of the class by opening the Old Testament lock with New Testament key, showing Christ was our Passover, and the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for us. Thus, if the lesson were taught in the class, and again at the desk with a new application, assisted with suitable illustrations and hymns, how much more likely to be useful than a lesson taken haphazard by teacher or superintendent.

I have found it to be a most useful plan to encourage the boys to write out as much of the Sunday evening lesson as they are able to remember during the week; true, they are frequently very lame attempts, but it assists the boys by enforcing the lesson on their minds in their own language, and it assists the teacher in showing him how *little* of his lesson is profitable or laid hold of by his scholars.

My first suggestion is, that the special aim of the Ragged School Union should be *Sunday Evening Mission Services for Children throughout London*, as a counterpoise to Day Schools without Bibles (or merely formal perfunctory religious teaching), and *these services should be conducted entirely by voluntary teachers*, in the best possible manner.

First, we should utilise all our own schools for this special purpose; for according to the schedule published with the last Report of the Union, although we had 164 affiliated schools, of these no less than 69 have have *no school at the time they would be the most useful, viz., on Sunday evening:* and even in the East, where such means are more wanted than in any other district of London, 23 are closed to the children in the evening. East, 49 scheduled, 23 no evening school; C. and N., 44 scheduled, 18 no evening school; West, 33 scheduled, 14 no evening school; South, 38 scheduled, 14 no evening school. These 69 schools closed deprive some 12,000 children (on the average of the Union) of Sunday evening instruction. It is true *some* few of these schools are doing other work. I don't depreciate that, except so far as it interferes with the direct object for which the school exists. Our primary work should be to get hold of the children, and *no other effort should be allowed to interfere with that one direct and urgent aim.* That is my first suggestion.

The second suggestion is, that when these are at work, an appeal from the Ragged School Union, signed by our President, drawn up in as weighty a tone as it is possible to adopt, be sent to every clergyman and minister in the metropolis and suburbs, showing the willingness of the children to attend religious teaching, and suggesting each place of worship should *adapt a room and find teachers*—the most earnest and intelligent members of their own congregations — to conduct these special Sunday Evening Services, asking besides that the work should be made the subject of public intercession to Almighty God, to guide and bless the movement, from the pulpit continually. Thus, the attention of the Christian Church would be directed in a practical manner to the pressing need of the times, and if responded to, would inevitably receive large reflex blessings. Our Union would, I feel sure, rise equal to the occasion, and shape the effort with wisdom and liberality; and funds would assuredly not be wanted to carry it out if asked for.

The time is propitious—the Christian Church is inquiring anxiously what the question of secular education involves? and would, I think, gladly hail a practical suggestion of this nature; and although I am quite aware it is no more than some of our schools have been doing for years past, in isolated instances, yet a concerted, hearty, united, and intelligent action, in the same direction and at this moment, is likely to

command a wide and hearty support, and, in my opinion, is the best and most effective method of promoting mission work in our Ragged Schools.

Mr. H. SPICER said that he had had some years' experience as superintendent of Ragged Schools in the neighbourhood. At these schools the average evening attendance two years ago was 500 or 600. Last year they took another room, when the attendance rose to 800, which had now increased to 1,100, the committee having taken a third room. The greatest drawback was the number of teachers, which was so small, they had to adopt both collective and separate teaching, often having in one room no less than 500 girls, the service being conducted by four teachers only. In another room 200 or 300 boys had been gathered under the care of three or four teachers. In the room in which he taught they had some 200 or 300 boys in classes of about twelve. He had not the slightest hesitation in saying that if schools were opened in every street they would be filled, as the children were in need of schools to which they might go on the Sunday. Such was their desire for schools that they would go even to inconvenient and disagreeable places, if only teachers were found ready to welcome them to something like intelligible services. Yet only half the work of Ragged School teachers would be done if confined to Sunday Schools. In their schools there would be an excellent opportunity for voluntary teachers, who could give them religious instruction in the week with greater freedom than on Sundays. Referring to those who had left the Day Schools, he understood only five per cent. of those who did so were able to read and write properly. The result was that in a short time they lost all the education which they had gained; and it was the duty of Ragged School teachers to look after these, and in order to benefit them it would be necessary to throw open their rooms in the week, and if they did so, he believed they would soon have crowds attending their meetings, the result of which would be that they would have greater influence over them on the Sunday.

Mr. MONTAGUE (King Edward Street) said that a teacher would not be doing his duty if he did not visit his scholars in the week, in order to ascertain something of their everyday life, by which means he must be able to give them advice in a homely, friendly manner. He well remembered fourteen years ago having a class of twenty-one in that building, their ages varying from twelve to fourteen years. He was in the habit of meeting them in the week when a Bible Class was held, with the most beneficial results. With a view to doing them good as far as lay in his power, he did his utmost to induce them to buy good, useful, wholesome books. This he did to counteract the influence of the vile trash of the day, which was circulated in every direction. The result of his efforts had been that many of the boys of his class availed themselves of the offer he made to supply them with books at 25 per cent. under published prices. But more than ten of them were members of Christian churches, two superintendents of Sunday Schools, and one a School Board visitor. Another necessary was good wholesome entertainment for the children. He advocated the introduction of

entertainments in order to counteract the evil influence of penny gaffs, which in many instances ruined children, leading them to attend theatres, and fostering in them a taste for questionable amusements. The Ragged School Union could assist them very much in this direction by providing them with apparatus for dissolving views. Teachers also should do all in their power to make the school attractive to the children. By being in their places a quarter of an hour before the school opened, as every teacher should, they would be able to learn something of the pursuits in which their scholars were engaged in the week. He and his colleague had adopted the plan of visiting every child's home once a year, for the purpose of inviting the parents to tea. Another good plan would be to circulate books in the homes of the children.

Mr. COXFORD (Dove Row) felt they had a great work yet to do in Ragged Schools, even in teaching reading and the rudiments of education to ignorant children. This was the class they had to deal with, and he believed that if they had their schools open in the week teachers would be found able and willing to instruct them. He suggested the holding of a meeting of parents once a week if possible. In the school with which he was connected they had tried entertainments, which he believed would be the means of accomplishing good.

Mr. ROUND (Buross Street) said that it would be well if all their schools were open for Children's Services on Sunday evenings, as children would thus be enabled to carry away with them those truths which would be useful to them in after life. He believed also in holding special services in the week, such services having been successful at the mission with which he was connected, they having a special service on Friday evening, which was attended by forty or fifty of the senior scholars. The plan adopted was to have a good supply of periodicals, which those who liked might read, also plenty of singing, and a short address. He would suggest that quarterly meetings be held for parents, with the view of leading them to seek to promote the welfare of their children.

Mr. PETTIFER said that he had had much to do with boys and girls at the age of fourteen to seventeen, many of whom were unable to read and write. He felt they must not only teach these children to read and write, but also to think, and put their reading and writing to practical use. If they did this the "Peacock," a public-house near the Bethnal Green Museum, and other similar places where many of the young congregated, would not be so full as they now were. He saw many of the young there, some of whom had passed through the school with which he was connected.

Mr. G. HOLLAND (George Yard) believed in giving children good, sound entertainments, and thought it would be well if the Union would give them rooms for services of praise. He had heard nothing about those children who were not to be touched by the compulsory clauses of the Education Act, of which there were a large number. What was to be done with those whom they could not permit to have books, with those who were in the lodging-houses in Flower and Dean Street and such places? A boy would come into his school to-day, living

in one street; two days afterwards he would be residing in another street, and in the course of a fortnight he might change his residence half a dozen times. In their entertainments they had nothing on which they could not ask God's blessing. One way to promote missionary work would be to induce the children to invite their parents to the services; he had tried this with most cheering results.

Mr. NEWMAN (of Hackney Juvenile Mission) said that more schools were required, a conclusion he had arrived at from seeing the numbers of children passing his house every Sunday on their way to the park, and from counting no less than 1,000 children in passing one Sunday evening from the top to the bottom of the Hackney Road. Referring to his own school, he said that on the Sunday evening they had in one school 400 to 500 children, as compared with 150 to 200 on the week evening. He advocated short prayers and short addresses, as full of illustration as it was possible to make them. He also was in favour of plenty of singing.

Mr. HUER (Barking) suggested the opening of Week-evening Schools for imparting secular instruction as a means of filling the schools on Sunday evening, a plan which had succeeded admirably in the school with which he was connected, they having had great difficulty in obtaining scholars on Sunday evening till they adopted this plan. He would suggest that the Ragged School Union should procure cards for pictorial teaching, and lend them to each school in turn for, say, a period of three months.

Mr. WILSON (Abbey Street) had, amongst other agencies, a Savings' Bank and Clothing Societies, which were found very useful in promoting their work. The had also a service on Sunday evening for parents. By means of the bank they obtained a great influence over the parents, as a parent absent from the service was asked the reason when coming to the bank, and a hearty invitation was given to the service on the next Sunday evening.

Mr. HALL (Derby Street) said that in their school, the average attendance at which was about 200, the difficulty was to obtain perfect silence. This difficulty had been overcome by giving those children who behaved well a mug of coffee and a biscuit. Many of the children were the lowest of the low, and, being unable to earn money on the Sunday as they did on the week-day, they were grateful for the food provided.

Mr. FRASER (Buross Street) said a great deal had been said about Sunday evening, but nothing about Sunday morning and afternoon, which appeared to be given up as a bad job. They commenced a Sunday morning Children's Service with an average attendance of about 27, which had now reached 100. The service was made attractive with plenty of singing. The Sabbath was thus begun well, which was a great blessing. Since the School Board had been established he could say their school had been better attended. One important matter he felt had been overlooked, viz., the Library, which was the means of accomplishing much good, as were also Mission Services. Another feature in their work at Buross Street was a Farthing-box, in which the children deposited their farthings till a shilling was obtained,

which would be sent to some patient in the hospital, or some boy would have a penny out to buy an invalid some milk.

The CHAIRMAN, in concluding the discussion, said that he heartily commended the practice of getting the parents, and also the children, to a Special Service once a week, and giving them short, interesting addresses. An anecdote nicely told, with a point in it, would send the parents away pleased, satisfied, and instructed. But, above all, let us bear in mind, whatever the future of Ragged Schools may be, however they may be altered by the action of the School Board, let us remember we have a solemn and important work to perform. It is at our peril we give it up. We must not delegate it to others; we must all of us get a more thorough Christian spirit, we must get more of the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. If I were short of teachers I would have a meeting of praise and prayer; I would ask one teacher to engage in prayer briefly, ask another to set a tune, and we would have a hymn, as we often used in connection with these schools, when, unfortunately, we were short of teachers. I trust the devotion of Christian people will be directed to this. But, whether we do the work or not, let me exhort you, as an old Ragged School teacher of some twenty-eight years' standing, to keep to this work; do it with more ardour, give to it more time, more energy, more perseverance, and more money if necessary. If you have not enough, come to the Union; we will give you money, that I can assure you. We are looking with favour upon all missionary labour. Some twelve months ago we introduced new rules, by which we are able to help mission work.

The second Conference was held at Ogle Mews Ragged School, Portland Road, on Friday, March 6th. The Earl of SHAFTESBURY presided.

After Mr. GENT had briefly explained the object of the meeting,

Mr. T. BROOKER said Ragged Schools from their formation been missionary. They had followed the gospel injunction: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature." It struck him, in connection with the missionary services in churches and chapels, the services as conducted did not meet the class of people they wished to meet; they required a simpler and more homely form. He did not think they would ever get the people they wished to get into their churches. Seventeen years ago he was superintendent of a school in Drury Lane. He once asked what instruction there was of those more advanced in life. Finding there was none, he started a service in the evening, into which God in his providence sent something like 100 or 120 people every Sunday. There was not one of these people who would go into a church or chapel. If they did so he did not believe any one would offer them a seat. How was mission work among adults to be promoted? First, by visitation. He thought it required much moral courage to be faithful to a man, to tell him his true condition in the sight of God,

to tell him he was a sinner. It was one thing to stand up in public and do so, and another thing to stand by a man's bedside and do so. Another means of promoting this work was by kind and affectionate words. He had in his eye two good Christian men: one always gave him a kind of shudder when he met him, the other was the personification of the gospel. One reminded him of a picture of Rembrandt of "Gloom," the other of a picture of Claude Lorraine of "Sunshine." The third essential to this work was tract distribution. All their instruction ought to be based upon the gospel.

His next point was the class of persons qualified. They should have, first of all, the love of God in their hearts; secondly, they should have the love of souls, feeling they were saved, and wishing others to participate in that salvation. Next, they would require a thorough knowledge of the way of salvation. Next a missionary would require a cheerful countenance. He did not believe the "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God," was lined on one side with weeping willow, and on the other with a jungle of thorn and thistle. He believed that on one side was the rose of Sharon, and on the other the lily of the valley. Again, they should never go forth to the work in their own strength; they should always remember "the three R's: man's ruin by nature, redemption by Christ Jesus, regeneration by the Spirit of God." Wherever these three were preached they would always find God's blessing resting upon it; therefore they should not go forth in their own strength, but looking up and expecting the help of the Third Person in the Trinity. He believed in the Holy Ghost, the author and giver of light, and wherever God's Word was read or preached they would need the same spirit which inspired holy men of old to write the Word of God, to apply it to the heart and conscience; and however pointedly they might put it, it was only tinkling cymbals or sounding brass unless they had the help of the Spirit. His last suggestion was, Never be downcast if you meet with disappointments. It was a truth ever true that the tares and the wheat both grew together; but, nevertheless, "the foundation of the Lord standeth sure."

Mr. J. H. BUCKINGHAM said the remarks he should make would refer more particularly to children. Their institution had been in existence thirty years, and every one must admit it had been a great blessing. He could not help feeling, when he remembered that they had reclaimed something like 200,000 children, that the fact must stand out to them all as showing they had been blessed by God in the work they had had to do. They had done a great work, and if they had not done it, God alone knew what the city of London would have been. He could not help thinking what would have been the case but for the Ragged School Union. He felt this was due to the fact that it was a missionary work. From its commencement they determined to do what they could to gather in those who were cast out by everybody. They started out with the determination to gather those children into their schools, not merely to do what they could to train them for this world, but also for that which is to come. They could not shut their eyes to the fact that another great work was being carried

on, but still they could do their work as well, and he could not help feeling that in the past they had laid hold of a class which no other movement had been able to grapple with so well. He did not believe, as some people did, that their work was done. He believed it was just beginning. The School Board would lay hold of many of their children, and in some cases the Board might do the work better than they had done it. But the children would leave them at the age of thirteen, and from that age to seventeen they needed more care than at any other.

Coming to the great point, he would say they might promote mission work in many ways. First, he would say to the friends connected with Day Schools, which had not yet been interfered with, "Do all you can to raise your teaching to its highest standard, and do not leave a stone unturned in order to bring the children up to the standard which the Government require." He said this because he felt safer with the schools in their hands than if they were in any other. The Night School element was most important, and they should do all they could to increase the number of those schools. As long as the Committee of the Union had funds in hand they were bound to help every Ragged School, and they would do so. Coming to the Sunday School, he would urge upon them by all means to strengthen and increase the number of these schools, because the whole of his argument assumed every portion of their work to be a missionary work. They must also do all they could to keep their schools supplied with teachers. He maintained that there were many scholars whom they could only get on Sunday. There were also many other things which would help them, such as special services for the young, which he would recommend to all. He would urge upon all present to hold special services for children, believing they could get a large number together on such occasions. They should invite some one well qualified to address them, and after the meeting he would suggest that classes should be held for those who were anxious about their soul's salvation. He wanted teachers to feel that souls were to be saved; they must be constantly watching over these young ones. They would thus be preparing them, and in course of time must lead them to join the churches in their several districts. There was another way of promoting this work. The Ragged School movement was not simply one of teaching; they had Mothers' Meetings, Children's Services, Penny Banks, Clothing Clubs, and every kind of movement essential and necessary for the evangelisation of this great city. As long as they maintained these the movement would be a missionary one. I believe in expecting a glorious harvest. We must go forth prepared for the work, not merely going to our class simply as a habit Sabbath by Sabbath, simply because we have been constantly going; but never entering the class till we have had prayer with God in secret, that you may be remembering each member of your class before the throne of grace, asking God to go with you and enable you to speak such words to your children as may cause them by the spirit of God to have a new heart within them. I say, then, Go down expecting God's blessing—waiting for it.

Mr. AMOR (Richmond Street) stated

that in the school with which he was connected the plan was to give secular instruction in the week, and religious instruction on Sunday. They had occasionally held services as suggested, which he believed would accomplish good. As a rule they gave no religious instruction in the Week-night School, but it always closed with a religious address.

Mr. GURNEY (Pear Street) would admit that the end and object of their work was the salvation of souls. How was this end to be promoted? First: By each one being more consecrated to their Lord and Master. Having been brought to a knowledge of the truth, they should feel they were not their own, but the Lord's. If they went in this spirit, and lived in this spirit, they would have a great blessing, not only in their own souls in constant communion with him, but they would go to their work realising eternity, realising the value of souls, whether of little ones or of parents. In order to promote their work they must have sympathy towards those among whom they worked. They met with much misery on every hand, and what they needed was kind, loving sympathy. They must tell the children the gospel was the only means of their salvation. They all had their work given by God. One could speak to the children and give an address, while another must go out and speak to the poor. Others, again, must have the work of teaching the little ones the things pertaining to this world, and then to try and lead them to Christ. Another essential requirement was devotion to Christ, and faith to believe his blessing would rest upon them. If they had these things, God would bless them in the future as he had done in the past.

Mr. PITTS (Ogle Mews) said they had heard much of what they ought to do; he would tell them what they ought *not* to do. Those working with him in the school in which they were assembled had often been discouraged by persons telling them they kept their children too clean. Many of the houses from which these children came looked very well on the outside, but inside were in a most miserable and dirty condition. As the fruit of their labours they had made these children clean, and he begged that that they would not discourage them by remarks such as he had mentioned. It had been said that the Ragged School Union was about thirty years old. He saw in the gospel that Jesus "began to be about thirty years of age" when he commenced his public ministry. He believed, however, that our Lord had been engaged in his Father's work before he was that age. He began his work at the age at which the priests were in the habit of commencing the duties of their sacred office. As they had begun to be about thirty years of age, they should go forth with more energy and fresh vigour, and take up this great mission work of seeking the conversion of their fellow-men, and bringing them to that Saviour who entered upon his public ministry when He "began to be about thirty years of age."

A TEACHER from Price Street, Blackfriars, thought it would be a great mistake to make any change in the secular instruction given in the Ragged Schools. In the school with which he was connected, where the greater part of the children were engaged in factory work till a late hour in the evening, if they gave up the secular instruction they would lose the opportunity

of great usefulness, and throw the children upon the world deprived of the opportunity of receiving higher instruction. At the same time, teaching of a religious tone should be adopted, by the reading of books of a religious tendency, by the use of the Bible, with explanations and short addresses to the children. Above all, the services on Sunday should be unfailingly kept up with the best ability it was possible to secure.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Gray's Yard) stated that in their school they were contemplating holding a kind of Sunday School in the week. The school would be arranged as on Sunday, and addresses would be given as on that day. For this purpose, however, they would require more workers. They had a Children's Church, Bible Classes for those above the age of fourteen years, and a class of girls conducted by a young lady, some of the members of which had been converted, and were now living to God's glory. They required still more of this work. He often thought they were like the steam-engine, which was going, but from which they could get more force if they had more fire. Let them get to prayer, and ask God what he would have them do, and then go and do it.

Mr. COLLIER (Grotto Passage) said in their schools in the week they commenced with a hymn and prayer, and closed with the same, together with a short address. On Thursday evening they had the classes arranged as on Sunday, as suggested by the previous speaker, which had been most successful. One thing necessary to the success of their work was firmness on the part of teachers, without which it would be impossible to carry on the work successfully. Kindness without firmness and good discipline would be lost. If they relied upon the strength of the Lord, their work would ever be most successful.

Mr. BENNETTS (Gray's Yard), urged the necessity of having more grey-haired teachers. He had been told that when the teachers married they could not come. He could only say they ought to. Speaking of the East End, he said they had as bad cases in the West as in the East, and it required the same Power to lift them up. On one Sunday he had climbed a room on the fourth floor of a house, in which he found forty-one persons assembled, swearing, drinking, and indulging in all kinds of sin, and among them one of his own scholars. This showed the cases they had to deal with. In order to promote their work they required better singing, which God had used as an instrument in the salvation of souls, as was shown in the present revival in Scotland. Again, he would say to teachers, never excite curiosity in children unless you intend to satisfy it. Their work might be promoted by Children's Churches. In these, they should be short in prayer; their subject of address should be well considered, but very simple; it should not be filled up entirely with anecdotes, but should contain one or two which should be skilfully applied. Another feature of their work was that they had a Prayer Meeting before the service and a Prayer Meeting after, at which they had a good attendance because the prayers were short.

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS gave an earnest exhortation to perseverance

in their missionary work among the young.

Mr. BARKER HARRISON (Perkins's Rents) said, with regard to Day Schools, they had always thought it most important to give earnest religious instruction. The great difficulty was to impart such instruction in such a manner that it should not be forgotten. The plan they had adopted was to write a text on the blackboard, which was then learnt by the whole of the children and afterwards explained, and other verses were brought to illustrate it. The result was, the Scripture was impressed upon the mind of the children in such a manner they could never forget it. At the same time, secular instruction had not been neglected, as shown by the results of the examination of her Majesty's Inspector, which had been most satisfactory. Religious instruction and secular education might go hand in hand with the most blessed results.

The noble CHAIRMAN said that he quite agreed in what had been said by the two gentlemen who had opened the discussion as to the objects of their mission and the various means adopted to promote it; but much of what had fallen from the speakers was only what had been done ever since the Ragged School Union was formed. He agreed with what had been said about those children who were clean. Persons had entered some of their schools, and, seeing the children clean, had expressed an opinion that they were a better class of children than the schools were intended for; the result was, they went away without leaving their subscriptions. As regards religious education, he would say, unless the Word of God were made the basis of all their education, unless they did all they could with the help of the Spirit of God, they were utterly useless, and he wished they might disappear from the face of the earth. There are hundreds of persons of weight and influence whose main object is to destroy the Ragged School system altogether, because it rests upon the Word of God. And are you going to lend your influence to these men? God forbid. I think I see before me men and women who are determined to stand by God's Word, and make it known to the degraded multitudes of this metropolis. Now I want you to think how you can prolong the existence of the Ragged School. Since the passing of the Education Act many have passed out of existence. Many are unwilling to pay rates and contributions, consequently the contributions are falling off. The Ragged School Union, I believe, has as much as before, but the local aid is falling off. We now come under the constant inspection of the officers of the Board of Education. How are you to compete with them? They are everlastingly altering their ground. They have used a new word—"efficient." What is it? It is always changing its ground. One day they say the teacher is not certificated, you must have a higher teacher, or the school will be shut up. The inspector says at another school the secular education is not so high as that demanded by the School Board. What are you going to do there? To give more secular education to the elimination of the religious teaching? Then comes a third objection. It is said they cannot interfere with your buildings at night. Thank God, under the

protection of night we can do a great deal. They want improvement here and alteration there How is it to be met? I have heard of one case only lately. So far have they carried their pedantry, they declare a school is not efficient because the desks are nailed to the wall! The decision of the inspector is absolute; there is no appeal. For these things your schools may be put out of existence. What I think we have a right to demand is this (I shall make it the ground of a motion in the House at the earliest opportunity):—Take up all the children roaming about the streets; provide for those who have no education at all before you come to our schools, who, though the education is imperfect, are giving an education, and if you find there is not the pedantic amount of cubic feet in the rooms which you require, you are bound to consider whether it is not better for the children to be in these schools, though they have not the education, and are not doing the amount of work you need. All these things are to be demanded when you have provided the glaring necessity. To say that many of your children shall be sent out to swell the mass of those who receive no education, if it were not pedantic would be Satanic. I think that is the ground upon which you must go, otherwise all your schools will be broken up in succession. Are you prepared with any scheme of resisting them? Can you raise funds? Are you only prepared to improve your own system so long as it exists? You do not know how soon you may be visited by the inspector, how soon you may be broken up. I know a school carried on in Whitechapel by one of the best friends of the human race. That school is in jeopardy. For a long time he has been able to make head against them; you will hear, I doubt not, in a year, that George Holland's school has been broken up, and he walking about for means to carry on his great work. You must cope with this matter. We must watch every case, and every case must be carried, if possible, by appeal to the School Board. I do believe many of those who have been chosen to support religious teaching will be ashamed when they find what is being done, and the demands made by the Board. All I say is—I return to what I began with—till they have made provision for the thousands of children walking about, they have no right, though they have the power, to come and say, "Till you fulfil our fanciful theories, hundreds of those who are now being led on in the ways of everlasting life should be sent back to their state of misery, and remain amongst the forgotten mass of humanity." I trust then that you will consider this matter, and that before our Ragged Schools are destroyed, thousands may be brought into the way of everlasting salvation.

[A full report of the proceedings at the two concluding Conferences will appear in our next number.]

THE MUD-RAKER.

BY THE LATE REV. THOMAS ALEXANDER.

I RECENTLY visited a lady in one of the suburbs of London. She had been confined to her room for years; and having been so long in the furnace, she was, in my eyes, pure as the gold that is seven times tried. I came out, full of heavenly thoughts, too soon, alas! dispelled by the noise and bustle and business of the busy London street. It was a raw, chill day, early in spring. The winter was just newly over and gone, and the roads were very muddy. As I turned sharply round a corner, I encountered a man who, with a mud-rake, was scraping off the surface mud from the highway. By the side of the public road was a row of middling-class houses, with little gardens in front; a low iron railing, and an iron gate to each house. A milkman had pulled the bell at the gate of one of the houses, and was waiting till the servant came down for the milk. It was this brief opportunity the mud-raker had embraced to speak a word in season to the milkman about his soul. Rake in hand he had stepped on to the footpath, and had uttered a few earnest, kindly words. I caught, as I passed, these closing sentences: "You will never repent it! He is a precious Master! Think about your soul." The tone was that of love; the look and manner that of intense earnestness.

I had passed on a few yards before the full meaning of the scene had fairly impressed itself upon me. It was so unlike London. It was what one had never seen, and scarcely ever heard before. So I was past a few yards ere I fully comprehended the meaning of it all; then, when I looked behind me, the man was back to his rake in the middle of the road, and the milkman was serving the maid with the milk; which, having done, he turned, and with a nod to the earnest evangelist in the middle of the way, went on and pursued his avocation. I turned many a time to look back at this genuine preacher of the gospel. But he was as busy raking at that mud as though he knew nothing in all the world beside. And I went on my way rejoicing; blessing God, as I went, that he had living men to speak the truth in love to whomsoever the Lord should send in their way.

Reader, let us take heed, lest that London mud-raker stands up a swift witness against us in the day of judgment! Do you, like this poor man, sow beside all waters? How many immortal fellow-creatures have you passed idly by? You had nothing to do, and you did nothing. You say, you "had no time." What would you have said had you been in this man's place? *He* redeemed the time.

The two or three moments in which the milkman was waiting for the answer to his call were embraced by this poor, busy, hard-working man; and who knows but to the saving of his soul? Depend on it, there is a day coming—and it will soon be here—when many rich, learned men would give all their riches, and all their learning, to be able to change places with that poor mud-raker. Go thou and do likewise.

VENICE RAGGED SCHOOL.

UNDER the designation of "Free Elementary School," a really Ragged School has been opened in Venice. The founder, the Rev. William Wallace, thus writes:—

"On the 14th of April last I opened a school in Venice, under the direction of a trained teacher. The aim of the school was to give not only a secular, but a religious education.

"During the first week thirty pupils were enrolled. The priests, however, could not bear to see an evangelical school, in which the Bible was taught, opened in the most bigoted quarter of the city. On Sunday, the 20th of April, a sermon was preached in the adjoining church against the school. The preacher urged the parents to withdraw their children, as it was under the direction of heretics. The following Monday the master was hissed as he entered the school, and a number of the children were absent. On Tuesday, the 22nd, when I visited the locality, at ten o'clock a.m., about 200 people were assembled in front of the building. Women and boys, instigated by the priests and mad with rage, were insulting the evangelicals. The windows and bell-pull were broken, and a board, bearing the inscription 'Free Elementary School,' which had been placed above the door the previous evening, was torn down, broken in pieces, and thrown into the canal. Owing to an informality, the school was closed by the government. But, in the meantime, the locality has been used as a preaching station.

"A larger and more commodious building has been secured, in a good position, as the former had become too small for the audiences. I have obtained permission to reopen the schools, and I hope to be able not only to bring back the pupils already enrolled, but to induce others to come. May I ask the prayers, sympathy, and support of Christians of all denominations on behalf of this work?"

Ragged School Union.

THE monthly meeting of the Managing Committee was held on March 13.

The receipts for February were reported to be £263 3s. 11d.; and the payments to be £398 3s. 10d.

Quarterly grants amounting to £155 7s. 6d. were voted to twenty-six schools.

A special grant of £20 was voted to Chequer Alley School.

A special grant of £5 was voted to Lansdowne Place School.

The annual grant to Britannia Row School was increased to £32 10s., in addition to grants for monitors.

A special grant of £3 was voted to Kentish Town School for the purchase of school material.

It was reported that two of the Conferences on "Mission Work in Ragged Schools, and how to improve it," had been held, and had been well attended.

Applications for grants to Old Ford, Perkins's Rents, and Vincent Street Schools, will be considered at the next meeting.

Facts and Scraps.

GROCERS' COMPANY AND RAGGED SCHOOL UNION.—We are glad to intimate that the Grocers' Company last month voted the sum of £100 to the Ragged School Union. On several former occasions this ancient corporation has given the same liberal donation to this Society.

FOX COURT, GRAY'S INN ROAD.—Following the precedent of many years, the Benchers of Gray's Inn placed their Hall at the disposal of the above school for their Annual Treat. The Treasurer presided, supported by several Benchers; all of whom testified to the value of Ragged Schools to society at large.

HARTSHORN COURT, GOLDEN LANE.—On March 5th ult., 200 poor people of both sexes, the youngest of whom was over sixty years of age, were entertained at tea by the managers of this Ragged School. It was the second of a series which Mr. W. J. Orsman is organising. At the first, held on the 30th December last, 160 accepted invitations whose average age was sixty-eight, the aggregate of the whole reaching 10,880 years. The party of last night included at least thirty who were over eighty years of age, the oldest stating her age to be eighty-three. An amateur choral society lent their aid to render the gathering still more attractive, while, after the tea-things had been cleared away, the Earl of Shaftesbury, who was accompanied by his daughter, Lady Templemore, and other providers of the feast, delivered addresses that commanded an attentive hearing.

MARIGOLD PLACE, BERMONDSEY.—On February 17th, Mrs. Farren, who for some time conducted the Mothers' Meeting at this Ragged School, was, on her retirement, presented by the members with a handsome papier maché writing case, as a token of their affection.

NEW TOTHILL STREET, WESTMINSTER.—This Ragged School has been for some time opened twice a week, under the direction of the Countess of Pembroke, for Special Religious Services for men. About sixty of the roughest of the rough, and many of the worst of the worst, are attracted. The addresses are preceded by a tea, provided at the cost of her ladyship.

OLD FORD.—Recently the teachers of this Ragged School presented Mr. Newman, the superintendent, with a handsome timepiece, as a slight recognition of his valuable services.

PEAR STREET, WESTMINSTER.—The following are the week-night operations of this Ragged School:—

Monday evening, a Girls' Sewing Class; Tuesday evening, a Meeting with gospel address; Wednesday evening, a Children's Service; Thursday evening, a Mothers' Meeting; Friday evening, a Bible Reading, which is well attended.

VINCENT STREET, OLD STREET ROAD.—On Feb. 24th, in the evening, the children of the Day Schools were examined by Mr. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union. Mr. Fellgate presided, supported by several of the Committee. The following prizes were distributed:—14 books for reading and spelling; 3 books for recitation, and 2 books for regular attendance. In the afternoon there was a sale of the garments made by the children to the parents at merely nominal prices. Mrs. Mucklow, on behalf of Lady Sturt, would have been present had not illness prevented. An examination and distribution of prizes to the Sunday scholars will shortly take place.

Notices of Meetings.

PRINCES STREET, LAMBETH BATHS.

On February 23rd, the annual meeting of the above school was held. Mr. J. Leyland presided.

The report stated that the Sunday School was attended by above 200 scholars, and the Ragged Church by 50. Every week-night is occupied by some social or religious work—including a flourishing Penny Bank, a Psalmody Class, a Religious Service, and a Bible Reading.

On the preceding Sunday, sermons on behalf of this school were preached at Vauxhall Walk Wesleyan Chapel, by the Revs. W. J. Heaton and A. W. Nightingale. The meeting was addressed by Rev. W. J. Heaton, Messrs. E. J. Hytche, Hazeldine, Rigley, &c.

OLD WOOLWICH ROAD.

At the 26th annual meeting of this school the chair was taken by Admiral Sir Astley Cooper Key, K.C.B., Governor of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, who called upon the secretary to read the report for the past year, which mentioned with much regret the resignation, in consequence of removal from this neighbourhood, of Miss Greenwood, the secretary to the Ladies' Committee, who has taken the most active interest in the work for the past seventeen years, and whose valuable services the Committee desired heartily to acknowledge. The total number of children admitted since the establishment of the school is 5,312—boys, 2,803; girls, 2,509. The number now on the books is 330, and the average attendance for the past year has been about 270. The inspector appointed by the Ragged School Union visited the school in July, and his examination gave most favourable results. Five old scholars have received prizes from the Committee of the Union during the year, for having kept their situations for twelve months with satisfaction to their employers. The inspector of the London School Board also held an examination, and reported the school as efficient. The committee readily consented to the proposal of one of their num-

ber that the school should be used on Sunday evenings for Children's Services, and these have been carried on throughout the year, with an attendance of 170. The Refuge for Destitute Boys has continued to work satisfactorily. Though six boys can be in the house at once, and the working space is only sufficient for that number, about 150 boys have passed through the Refuge since its establishment. Parents' Club, to encourage those who can to make small savings:—Number of depositors, 134; total amount deposited, £31 13s. 5d.; interest for the year given by an old friend, £3 4s. The Sick Provident Society has 35 members, and the amount paid during sickness and for medical attendance during the year has been £18 13s. 5d.

SERMON LANE, ISLINGTON.

The annual meeting of the Sermon Lane Mission, an organisation which has grown out of the institution known for many years as the Sermon Lane Ragged School, was held at Myddelton Hall, under the presidency of the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury.

Mr. Cooksey, the hon. secretary, read the Report of the committee, in which they said this mission had grown out of the Ragged School work commenced by a few devoted men and women some twenty-five years ago. Connected with the Ragged School there was from the beginning the Sunday School, as well as various other agencies for the amelioration of the condition of the poor. In the year 1869, the superintendent of the afternoon Sunday School commenced to visit the homes of the children, and persuaded many of the parents to attend a simple service in the school-room on Sunday. Simple services are held every Sunday morning and evening, and the average attendance is, in the winter, morning, 100; evening, 130. After the evening service a prayer meeting is held, at which the average attendance is, in winter, 70. Service is also held on Tuesday evening in every week, the average attendance at which is, in winter, 80. Sunday classes are held in the afternoon, average attendance, winter, 150. In the evening, classes are held, the average attendance being, winter, 130; summer, 80. A Girls' Sewing Class meets every Monday. A Clothing Club has been established for the encouragement of the poor people, who pay a trifle weekly. A Mothers' Meeting has been conducted for many years; a Maternity Society has also been established. A Class for the weekly practice of Singing is held. A Class for the study of the Scriptures is held every Thursday evening, attended by about twelve to fifteen working men and women. In the Penny Bank the number of accounts last year was 560, and the amount deposited £212 15s. A Day School is carried on, average attendance 140. The district lying close to Sermon Lane, comprising some 10,000 souls, chiefly of the working-classes, and a great number of the very poor, is thoroughly visited by the superintendent and tract distributors, some of whom are working-men brought to a knowledge of Christ through attending the mission services.

The meeting was addressed by Revs. R. C. Billing, T. Turner, and Messrs. Curtis, Hargreaves, Surr, Kirkham, and Hugh Owen.

THE LEISURE HOUR

FOR 1874.

Announcements.

Maiden May. By W. H. G. KINGSTON.

Matthew Morrison: an Autobiography. By the Author of "Laird Nabal."

The Mandarin's Daughter: a Story of the Chinese Great Rebellion, and Gordon's "Ever-victorious Army."

Father and Son: a Misunderstanding. By the Author of "The Harvest of a Quiet Eye." With Illustrations by CUTHBERT BEDE.

The New World and the Old: American Illustrations of European Antiquities. By Principal DAWSON, LL.D., of Montreal.

The Land of the Giant Cities. By the Rev. W. WRIGHT, of Damascus.

Puns and Punning. By JOHN TIMBS.

Some Social Papers. By the Rev. S. B. JAMES, C. M. SMITH, and others.

Natural History Anecdotes.
By FRANK BUCKLAND, HENRY LEE, and others.

A Visit to New Guinea: also South Pacific Sketches. By the Rev. W. W. GILL, B.A.

Sonnets for the Sacred Year. By the Rev. S. J. STONE, M.A., Author of "The Thanksgiving Hymn."

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NEW CASE.—FEBRUARY, 1874.

EXTRAORDINARY CASE recently reported of A LADY at SOUTHEND.

The following letter from the patient's husband will best relate the benefits she received—(the name of the lady is Mrs. SAML. HAWTREE, of SOUTHEND, ESSEX):—

"Six years ago my wife complained of failing health. Her lungs were much affected. During the first four years of her illness she was attended at different times by four physicians, but became much weaker. *The muscles of the arms wasted nearly all away. Her breathing became so difficult, especially at night, that persons in the street could hear her, and no sleep could be got in the house.*

"At the end of the four years, when at her worst, the physician told me '*her lungs were like a honeycomb,*' and that she was '*past human aid.*' She was sinking, and so weak I could not think of bringing her to you, I therefore procured your medicine through the chemist at Rochford. She took it at bed-time, and *for the first time in twelve months I was not once disturbed with the distressing sounds.* She persevered for six months, and was so altered in appearance and health that *those only who had known her, before and after, could believe the extraordinary change she had undergone.* Winter brought on some symptoms of the old complaint, but the Balsam has again removed it. By the blessing of God *it has raised her from the very verge of the grave.*

"I may add that before taking your medicine the expectoration was very bad, and in the first month she brought up large quantities of the most corrupt matter, but after this it ceased; also before taking it she was unable to get out at all, but *but now she can walk and ride well for miles in the open air—even in winter.*

"You are at liberty to make any use of this letter or any part of it you please.

"I am, dear sir, yours faithfully, SAML. HAWTREE."

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	£	s.	d.
Addington, Mrs. Henry	5	0	0
Airey, Miss	1	0	0
Armstrong, W., Esq.	3	3	0
Ashley, Hon W.	2	2	0
Anson, Sir W. R., Bart., per Messrs. Hoare	5	0	0
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Bass, Mrs.	5	0	0
Baiss, J., Esq.	1	1	0
Bennett, Mrs.	0	4	4
Bourne, Mrs.	1	0	0
Burgess, Mrs. A. E.	3	0	0
Cartwright, Miss	2	0	0
Chandler, Mrs.	1	0	0
Churchill, Miss E. A.	1	0	0
Churchill, Miss F. C.	1	0	0
Clowes, Miss	0	10	6
Clayton, F. S., Esq.	1	1	0
Clive, Rev. A.	5	0	0
Collins, Miss	2	2	0
Cox, Miss J.	0	5	0
Croggan, Messrs.	1	1	0
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Bailey, Mr. and Mrs.	0	5	0
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Clark, Mrs.	0	13	6
Friend to Ragged Schools	5	0	0
Greenwood, Mrs.	0	7	6
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Heath's, Miss, Coll.	1	4	6
Hughes, Mrs. & Miss	0	5	0
M. S. C.	0	5	0
Ladd, Mrs.	0	5	0
Pearce, Mrs.	0	5	0
Pickett, Miss	0	5	0
Pinniger, Misses	0	15	0
Pinniger, Mr. J. F.	0	7	0
Pinniger, Mr. T.	0	5	0
Radbourne, Mrs.	0	5	0
Sale of Doves	0	2	0
Servants	0	2	0
Sums under 5s.	2	5	0
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Holford, R. S., Esq.	2	2	0
Irvine, Mrs.	1	1	0
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Landon, Mrs.	10	0	0
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Reade, Mrs.	0	10	0
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Scott, Mrs.	1	1	0
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Tomkins, Miss, Coll.	2	3	6
Trotter, Mrs.	2	0	0
Toller, John, Esq.	1	0	0
Tweedy, Messrs. E. H.	0	10	6
Usborne, Miss E.	25	0	0
Western, Geo. A., Esq.	2	2	0
Donation	50		0
Williams, H. R., Esq.	1	1	0
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School Fund.

Little Saffron Hill Dinner Fund.

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